





THE PEOPLE *and*
CLOSE THE BOOK

TWO ONE-ACT PLAYS
BY SUSAN GLASPELL

Author of "Trifles," Co-Author
with George Cram Cook of
"Suppressed Desires."

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

New York:
FRANK SHAY
1918

The People

was First Produced in New York
by the Provincetown Players on
November 18, 1917, with
the Following Cast:

EDWARD WILLS, *Editor of "The People"* GEORGE CRAM COOK
OSCAR TRIPP, *Associate Editor* PENDLETON KING
THE ARTIST DONALD CORLEY
SARA NINA MOISE
TOM HOWE, *printer* LEWIS B. ELL
The Boy from Georgia LESLIE C. BEMIS
The Man from the Cape IRA REMSEN
The Woman from Idaho SUSAN GLASPELL
The Earnest Approach LEW PARRISH
The Light Touch PIERRE LOVING
The Anarchist HARRY KEMP
The Philosopher HUTCHINSON COLLINS

Produced under the direction of Nina Moise

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produce THE PEOPLE and CLOSE THE BOOK should
be made to Miss Glaspell, care The Provincetown
Players, 139 Macdougall Street, New York.

PS3513
L35P4
1918
MAIN

The People

SCENE: *The office of "The People"—a desk, a table on which are manuscripts and magazines. On the walls are revolutionary posters. Wads of paper are thrown about on the floor—the office of a publication which is radical and poor. The curtain shows OSCAR at one end of table writing. There is a door rear, door left. Enter rear, TOM HOWE, a galley-proof in his hand.*

TOM: Why are you writing?

OSCAR (*Jauntily*): Because I am a writer.

TOM: But I thought you said there wasn't going to be another issue of "*The People*."

OSCAR (*With dignity*): I am writing.

TOM: There's a woman here with a suit case.

OSCAR: What's in it?

TOM: She wants to see the Editor.

OSCAR (*After writing a minute*): All right.

(*Exit Tom, enter woman with suit case. She is middle aged, wears plain clothes not in fashion. Her manner is a little shrinking and yet as she stands in the doorway looking about the bare room, her face is the face of one who has come a long way and reached a wonderful place.*)

THE WOMAN: This is the office of "*The People*"?

OSCAR: Um-hum.

THE WOMAN (*In a bated way*): I came to see the author of those wonderful words.

OSCAR (*Rising*): Which wonderful words?

THE WOMAN: About moving toward the beautiful distances.

OSCAR: Oh. Those are Mr. Wills' wonderful words. (*Begins to write as one who has lost interest*)

THE WOMAN: Could I see him?

OSCAR: He isn't here yet. He's just back from California. Won't be at the office till a little later.

THE WOMAN (*In a manner of repressed excitement*): He has been to California? He has just ridden across this country?

OSCAR: Yes. Long trip. He was very cross over the 'phone

THE WOMAN (*Pained*): Oh—no. I think you're mistaken.

OSCAR: Anything you care to see me about?

THE WOMAN (*After considering*): I could see him a little later, couldn't I?

OSCAR: Yes, if it's important. Of course he'll be very busy.

THE WOMAN: It is important. At least—yes, it is important.

OSCAR: Very well then—later in the morning.

THE WOMAN (*Thinking aloud*): I will stand down on the street and watch the people go by.

OSCAR: What?

THE WOMAN: The people. It's so wonderful to see them—so many of them. Don't you often just stand and watch them?

OSCAR: No, madam, not often. I am too busy editing a magazine about them.

THE WOMAN: Of course you are busy. You help edit this magazine? (*Looks about at the posters*)

OSCAR: I am associate editor of "*The People*."

THE WOMAN: That's a great thing for you—and you so young. Does Mr. Wills write in this room?

OSCAR: That is his desk.

THE WOMAN (*Looking at the desk*): It must be a wonderful thing for you to write in the same room with him.

OSCAR: Well, I don't know; perhaps it is a wonderful thing for him to—I am Oscar Tripp, the poet.

THE WOMAN (*Wistfully*): It would be beautiful to be a poet. (*Pause*) I will come back later. (*Picks up suit case*)

OSCAR: Just leave that if you aren't going to be using it in the meantime.

THE WOMAN (*Putting it down near the door*): Oh, thank you. I see that you are a kind young man.

OSCAR: That is not the general opinion.

THE WOMAN: I wonder why it is that the general opinion is so often wrong? (*Stands considering it for a moment, then goes out*)

OSCAR: I don't quite understand that woman.

(*Enter Tom Howe, printer*)

TOM: If this paper can't go on, I ought to know it. I could get a job on the *Evening World*. (*Oscar continues writing*) Can it go on?

OSCAR: I don't see how it can, but many a time I haven't seen how it could—and it did. Doubtless it will go on, and will see days so much worse than these that we will say, "Ah, the good old days of March, 1917."

TOM: But can it pay salaries?

OSCAR (*Shocked*): Oh, no, I think not; but we must work because we love our work.

TOM: We must eat because we love our food.

OSCAR: You'll know soon. There's to be a meeting here this morning.

(*Enter Sara. Tom goes out. Sara is dressed like a young business woman and has the simple direct manner of a woman who is ready to work for a thing she believes in*)

SARA: Ed not here yet?

OSCAR: No.

SARA: Did he get any money?

OSCAR: Doesn't look like it. He was snappish over the phone. Guess he's for giving it up this time.

SARA: I don't want to give it up. (*She sits at the table and unfolds a manuscript she has brought with her*)

OSCAR: Well, it's not what we want, it's what people want, and there aren't enough of them who want us.

SARA: The fault must lie with us.

OSCAR: I don't think so. The fault lies with the failure to—(*the artist has entered*)

THE ARTIST: I'll tell you where the fault lies. We should give more space to pictures and less to stupid reading matter. (*Takes a seat at the table*)

OSCAR: We have given too much expensive white paper to pictures and too little to reading matter—especially to poetry. That's where the fault lies. (*Enter Edward Wills, editor*)

ED: I'll tell you where the fault lies. (*Points first to the artist, then to Oscar*) Here! Just this! Everybody plugging for his own thing. Nobody caring enough about the thing as a whole.

OSCAR (*Rising*): I'll tell you where the fault lies. (*Points to Ed.*) Here! This. The Editor-in-chief returning from a

long trip and the first golden words that fall from his lips are words of censure for his faithful subordinates.

SARA: How are you Ed?

ED: Rotten. I hate sleeping cars. I always catch cold.

SARA: Any luck?

ED (*His hand around his ear*): What's the word?

(*Enter The Earnest Approach*)

EARNEST APPROACH: I have heard that you may have to discontinue.

ED (*Sitting down at his desk, beginning to look through his mail*): It seems we might as well.

EARNEST APPROACH: Now just let me tell you what the trouble has been and how you can remedy it. "*The People*" has been afraid of being serious. But you deal with ideas, and you must do it soberly. There is a place for a good earnest journal of protest, but all this levity—this fooling—(*Enter Light Touch*)

LIGHT TOUCH: Came in to see you, Ed, to say I hope the news I'm hearing isn't true.

ED: If it's bad, it's true.

LIGHT TOUCH: Well, it's an awful pity, but you've been too damn serious. A lighter touch—that's what "*The People*" needs. You're as heavy as mud. Try it awhile longer along frivolous lines. I was in the building and just ran in to let you have my idea of what's the matter with you.

OSCAR: If we had as many subscribers as we have people to tell us what's the matter with us—(*Enter Philosopher and Anarchist, Printer follows them in, a page of manuscript in his hand*)

ED: Now the Philosopher and Anarchist will tell us what's the matter with us.

ANARCHIST: Too damn bourgeois! You should print on the cover of every issue—"To hell with the bourgeoisie! Pigs!"

PHILOSOPHER: The trouble with this paper is efficiency. (*They start to rise in their chairs. The Printer falls back against the wall, then staggers out of the room*)

ED: Dear God! There are things it seems to me I can not bear.

PHILOSOPHER: It should be more carelessly done, and then it would be more perfectly done. You should be less definite,

and you would have more definiteness. You should not know what it is you want, and then you would find what you are after.

OSCAR: You talk as if we had not been a success. But just last night I heard of a woman in Bronxville who keeps "*The People*" under her bed so her husband won't know she's reading it.

ANARCHIST: If you had been a success you would have fired that woman with so great a courage that she would proudly prop "*The People*" on the pillow!

ARTIST (*Who is sketching the Anarchist*): It was my pictures got us under the bed.

OSCAR (*Haughtily*): I was definitely told it was my last "Talk with God" put us under the bed.

ANARCHIST: Can you not see that she puts you under the bed because you yourselves have made concessions to the bourgeoisie? Cows! Geese!

ARTIST (*Who has been sketching the Anarchist*): It should print more pictures.

OSCAR: It must print more poetry. (*They glare at one another*)

EARNEST APPROACH: It should be more serious.

LIGHT TOUCH: It should be more frivolous.

(*Enter the Boy from Georgia—dressed like a freshman with a good allowance*)

THE BOY: Is this the office of "*The People*"?

OSCAR: No, this is a lunatic asylum.

THE BOY (*After a bewildered moment*): Oh, you're joking. You know (*confidentially*), I wondered about that—whether you would joke here. I thought you would. (*Stepping forward*) I came to see the Editor—I want to tell him—

ED: So many people are telling me so many things, could you tell yours a little later?

THE BOY: Oh, yes. Of course there must be many important things people have to tell you.

ED: Well—many. (*Boy goes out rear—reluctantly*)

ARTIST (*Who has all the time been glaring at Oscar*): Speaking for the artists, I want to say right now—

OSCAR: Speaking for the writers, I wish to say before we go further—

EARNEST APPROACH: A more serious approach—

LIGHT TOUCH: A lighter touch—

ANARCHIST: Speaking for the Anarchists—

PHILOSOPHER: Speaking for the truth—

(Phone rings, Oscar answers. Enter The Man from the Cape—slow, heavy)

ED: You have come to tell us something about this paper?

THE MAN: Yes.

ED: There are a number ahead of you. Will you wait your turn? *(A look of disappointment)* I'll be glad to see you as soon as I can. There in the outside office? *(Motioning door rear)*

(A moment The Man stands there, a mute ponderous figure, then very slowly goes out)

OSCAR *(Hanging up receiver)*: Moritz Paper Company Bill got to be paid today. And here—*(Takes from his drawer a huge packet of bills)*

EARNEST APPROACH: You could pay your bills if you were not afraid to be serious!

LIGHT TOUCH: You could pay your bills if you were not afraid to be gay!

EARNEST APPROACH *(From the door, very solemnly)*: A more earnest approach would save "*The People*."

LIGHT TOUCH: A lighter touch would turn the trick!

(Exeunt)

ANARCHIST *(Going over and pounding on Editor's desk)*: To hell with the bourgeoisie! Apes!

PHILOSOPHER: Efficiency has put out the spark.

ED: Well, as long as the spark appears to be good and out, may I, in the name of efficiency, ask you who do not belong here to retire, that we may go ahead with our work?

PHILOSOPHER: There would be greater efficiency in our remaining. There would be form. You have lacked form.

ANARCHIST: You have lacked courage! Donkeys!

ED: It would be illuminating, Leo, to hear you run through the animal kingdom—toads, crocodiles, a number of things you haven't mentioned yet, but the animal kingdom is large—and we have work to do.

PHILOSOPHER: You lack form in your work. By form I do not mean what you think I mean. I mean that particular significance of the insignificant which is the fundamental—

ED: We couldn't understand it. Why tell us?

PHILOSOPHER: No (*Goes to door*): You couldn't understand it. (*Exit*)

ANARCHIST: Rest in peace. (*Gesture of benediction. Then from the door, hissing*): Centipedes! (*Exit, all laugh*)

ED: What's the matter with us is our friends.

SARA (*Quietly*): Well, to be or not to be. I guess it's up to you, Ed.

ED: Just what would we be going on for? To make a few more people like the dear ones who have just left us? Seems to me we could best serve society by not doing that. Precisely what do we do? —aside from getting under the bed in Bronxville. Now and then something particularly rotten is put over and we have a story that gets a rise out of a few people, but—we don't change any thing.

SARA: We had another hope. We were going to express ourselves so simply and so truly that we would be expressing the people.

ED (*Wearily*): The People. I looked at them all the way across this continent. Oh, I got so tired looking at them—on farms, in towns, in cities. They're like toys that you wind up and they'll run awhile. They don't want to be expressed. It would topple them over. The longer I looked the more ridiculous it seemed to me that we should be giving our lives to—(*picks up the magazine and reads*) "The People—A Journal of the Social Revolution." Certainly we'd better cut the sub-title. The social revolution is dead.

OSCAR: You don't think you are bringing back any news, do you, Ed?

ARTIST (*Takes up magazine*): Instead of a sub-title we could have a design. Much better. (*Glares at Oscar, then begins to draw*)

SARA: This is a long way from what you felt a year ago, Ed. You had vision then.

ED: You can't keep vision in this office. It's easy enough to have a beautiful feeling about the human race when none of it is around. The trouble about doing anything for your fellow-

man is that you have to do it with a few of them. Oh, of course that isn't fair. We care. I'll say that for us. Even Oscar cares, or he wouldn't work the way he has. But what does our caring come to? It doesn't connect up with anything, and God knows it doesn't seem to be making anything very beautiful of us. There's something rather pathetic about us.

OSCAR: Or is it merely ridiculous?

SARA: Let me read you something, Ed. (*Takes up magazine, reads very simply*) "We are living now. We shall not be living long. No one can tell us we shall live again. This is our little while. This is our chance. And we take it like a child who comes from a dark room to which he must return—comes for one sunny afternoon to a lovely hillside, and finding a hole, crawls in there till after the sun is set. I want that child to know the sun is shining upon flowers in the grass. I want him to know it before he has to go back to the room that is dark. I wish I had pipes to call him to the hilltop of beautiful distances. I myself could see further if he were seeing at all. Perhaps I can call *you*; you who have dreamed and dreaming know, and knowing care. Move! Move from the things that hold you. If you move, others will move. Come! Now. Before the sun goes down." (*Very quietly*) You wrote that, Ed.

ED: Yes, I wrote it; and do you want to know why I wrote it? I wrote it because I was sore at Oscar and wanted to write something to make him feel ashamed of himself.

(*While Sara is reading, The Woman has appeared at the door, has moved a few steps into the room as if drawn by the words she is hearing. Behind her are seen the Boy from Georgia, The Man from the Cape.*)

THE WOMAN (*Moving forward*): I don't believe that's true! I don't believe that's true! Maybe you think that's why you wrote it, but it's not the reason. You wrote it because it's the living truth, and it moved in you and you had to say it.

ED (*Rising*): Who are you?

THE WOMAN: I am one of the people. I have lived a long way off. I heard that call and—I had to come.

THE BOY (*Blithely*): I've come too. I'm from Georgia. I read it, and I didn't want to stay at school any longer. I said, "I want something different and bigger—something more like this." I heard about your not being able to sell your paper on

the newsstands just because lots of people don't want anything different and bigger, and I said to myself, "I'll sell the paper! I'll go and sell it on the streets!" And I got so excited about it that I didn't even wait for the dance. There was a dance that night, and I had my girl too.

THE WOMAN: He didn't even wait for the dance.

OSCAR: The idealists are calling upon the intellectuals, and "calling" them.

ED (*To The Man*): And what did you leave, my friend?

THE MAN (*Heavily*): My oyster bed. I'm from the Cape. I had a chance to go in on an oyster bed. I read what you wrote—a woman who had stopped in an automobile left it, and I said to myself, "I'm nothing but an oyster myself. Guess I'll come to life."

ED: But—what did you come here for?

THE MAN: Well—for the rest of it.

ED: The rest of what?

THE MAN: The rest of what you've got.

THE BOY: Yes—that's it; we've come for the rest of what you've got.

OSCAR: This is awkward for Ed.

THE WOMAN: Give it to us.

ED: What?

THE WOMAN: The rest of it.

ED (*An instant's pause*): I haven't got anything more to give.

THE BOY: But you made us think you had. You led us to believe you had.

THE WOMAN: And you have. If you hadn't more to give, you couldn't have given that.

OSCAR: Very awkward.

THE WOMAN: You said—"I call to *you*. You who have dreamed, and dreaming know, and knowing care." Well, three of us are here. From the South and the East and the West we've come because you made us want something we didn't have, made us want it so much we had to move the way we thought was toward it—before the sun goes down.

THE BOY: We thought people here had life—something different and bigger.

OSCAR: Perhaps we'd better go. Poor Ed.

ED: I wish you'd shut up, Oscar.

THE WOMAN: I know you will give it to us.

ED: Give what to you?

THE WOMAN: What you have for the people. (*Oscar coughs*) What you made us know we need.

OSCAR: You shouldn't have called personally. You should have sent in your needs by mail.

ED: Oscar, try and act as if you had a soul.

THE WOMAN: I think he really has. (*A look at Oscar—then, warmly*): At least he has a heart. It's only that he feels he must be witty. But you—you're not going to let us just go away again, are you? He gave up his oyster bed, and this boy didn't even wait for the dance, and me—I gave up my tombstone.

ED: Your—?

THE WOMAN: Yes—tombstone. It had always been a saying in our family—"He won't even have a stone to mark his grave." They said it so much and so solemnly that I thought it meant something. I sew—plain sewing, but I've often said to myself—"Well, at least I'll have a stone to mark my grave." And then, there was a man who had been making speeches to the miners—I live in a town in Idaho—and he had your magazine, and he left it in the store, and the storekeeper said to me, when I went there for thread—"Here, you like to read. Don't you want this? I wish you would take it away, because if some folks in this town see it, they'll think I'm not all I should be." He meant the cover.

ARTIST (*Brightening*): That was my cover.

THE WOMAN (*After a smile at The Artist*): So I took it home, and when my work was done that night, I read your wonderful words. They're like a spring—if you've lived in a dry country, you'll know what I mean. And they made me know that my tombstone was as dead as—well, (*with a little laugh*) as dead as a tombstone. So I had to have something to take its place.

SARA (*Rising and going to The Woman*): Talk to him. Tell him about it. Come, Oscar!

BOY FROM GEORGIA: As long as there seems to be so much uncertainty about this, perhaps I'd better telegraph father. You see, the folks don't know where I am. I just came.

THE WOMAN: He didn't even stay for the dance.

BOY FROM GEORGIA: I'll be glad to sell the papers. (*Seeing a pile of them on the table*) Here, shall I take these?— and I'll stop people on the street and tell *why* I'm selling them.

OSCAR: No, you can't do that. You'd be arrested.

THE WOMAN: Let him sell them. What's the difference about the law, if you have the right idea?

OSCAR: The right idea has given us trouble enough already.

THE MAN: There's something sure about an oyster bed.

OSCAR: You come with me and have a drink. Something sure about that too.

THE WOMAN: He could have had a drink at home.

SARA (*To Artist*): Coming, Joe? (*To The Boy*): It was corking of you to want to help us. We must talk about— (*All go out except The Woman and The Editor*).. (*A Pause*)

THE WOMAN: I am sorry for you.

ED: Why?

THE WOMAN (*Feeling her way and sadly*): Because you have the brain to say those things, and not the spirit to believe them. I couldn't say them, and yet I've got something you haven't got. (*With more sureness*) Because I know the thing you said was true.

ED: Will you sit down?

THE WOMAN: No—I'll go. (*Stands there uncertainly*) I don't know why I should be disappointed. I suppose it's not fair to ask you to be as big as the truth you saw. Why should I expect you would be?

ED: I'm sorry. I suppose now you'll regret your tombstone.

THE WOMAN: No—it was wonderful to ride across this country and see all the people. The train moving along seemed to make something move in me. I had thoughts not like any thoughts I'd ever had before—your words like a spring breaking through the dry country of my mind. I thought of how you call your paper "A Journal of The Social Revolution," and I said to myself—This is the Social Revolution! Knowing that your tombstone doesn't matter! *Seeing*—that's the Social Revolution.

ED: Seeing—?

THE WOMAN (*As if it is passing before her*): A plain, dark trees off at the edge, against the trees a little house and a

big barn. A flat piece of land fenced in. Stubble, furrows. Horses waiting to get in at barn; cows standing around a pump. A tile yard, a water tank, one straight street of a little town. The country so still it seemed dead. The trees like—hopes that have been given up. The grave yards—on hills—they come so fast. I noticed them first because of my tombstone, but I got to thinking about the people—the people who spent their whole lives right near the places where they are now. There's something in the thought of them—like the cows standing around the pump. So still, so patient, it—kind of hurts. And their pleasures: —a flat field fenced in. Your great words carried me to other great words. I thought of Lincoln, and what he said of a few of the dead. I said it over and over. I said things and didn't know the meaning of them 'till after I had said them. I said—"The truth—the truth—the truth that opens from our lives as water opens from the rocks." Then I knew what that truth was. (*Pause, with an intensity peculiarly simple*): "Let us here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain." I mean—all of them. (*A gesture, wide, loving*) Let life become what it may become! —so beautiful that everything that is back of us is worth everything it cost.

(*Enter Tom, Printer*)

TOM: I've got—(*feeling something strange*): Sorry to butt in, but I can still get that job on *The Evening World*. If this paper is going to stop, I've got to know it.

ED: Stop! This paper can't stop!

TOM: Can't stop! Last I heard, it couldn't do anything else.

ED: That was—long ago.

TOM: Oh—you've got something to go on with?

ED: Yes, something to go on with.

TOM: I see. (*Looks at woman, as if he didn't see, glances at her suit case*): I'm glad. But—I've got to be sure. This—is the truth?

ED: The truth. The truth that opens from our lives as water opens from the rocks. (*Tom backs up*)

THE WOMAN (*Turning a shining face to the printer*): Nobody really needs a tombstone!

CURTAIN

Close the Book

As produced by the Provincetown Players,
New York City

CAST

JHANSI EDITH UNGER
PEYTON ROOT, an instructor in the University... JAMES LIGHT
MRS. ROOT, Peyton's Mother SUSAN GLASPELL
MRS. PEYTON, his Grandmother CLARA SAVAGE
UNCLE GEORGE PEYTON, President of the Board of Regents
..... JUSTUS SHEFFIELD
BESSIE ROOT ALICE MACDOUGAL
STATE SENATOR BYRD DAVID CARB
MRS. STATE SENATOR BYRD ESTHER PINCH

PLACE—*A University Town*

TIME—*Today*

SCENE: *The library in the Root home, the library of middle-western people who are an important family in their community, and who think of themselves as people of culture. It is a room which shows pride of family: on the rear wall are two large family portraits—one a Revolutionary soldier, the other a man of a later period. On the low book-cases, to both sides of door rear, and on the mantel, right, are miniatures and other old pictures. There is old furniture—mahogany recently done over: an easy chair near the fireplace, a divan left. A Winged Victory presides over one of the book-cases, a Burne Jones is hung. It is a warmly lighted, cheerful room—books and flowers about. In addition to the rear door, opening on a hall, there is a door left, and right a corner window. The curtain discloses JHANSI and PEYTON on the divan, MRS. ROOT about to leave through the door rear. JHANSI is piquant, dressed as a non-conformist, but attractively. Her dress should further the idea of her being a gypsy, but the whole should be charming and not*

bizarre. PEYTON is a rather helpless young man, with a sense of humor that is itself rather helpless, dry, a little awkward, yet whimsical.

MRS. ROOT: I'll see, Peyton, if your grandmother isn't ready to come down. (*Exit*)

JHANSI (*Springing up*): It's absurd that I should be here!

PEYTON: I know, Jhansi, but just this once—as long as it means so much to mother, and doesn't really hurt us.

JHANSI: But it does hurt me, Peyton. These walls stifle me. You come of people who have been walled in all their lives. It doesn't cage you. But me—I am a gypsy! Sometimes I feel them right behind me—all those wanderers, people who were never caught; feel them behind me pushing me away from all this!

PEYTON: But not pushing you away from me, dear. You love me, Jhansi, in spite of my family?

JHANSI: If I did'nt love you do you think I could endure to come to this dreadful place? (*a look about the well-furnished room*)—and meet these dreadful people? Forgive me for aluding to your home and family, Peyton, but I must not lose my honesty, you know.

PEYTON: No, dear; I don't think you are losing it. And perhaps I'd better not lose mine either. There's one thing I haven't mentioned yet. (*Hesitates*) Mr. Peyton is coming to dinner tonight.

JHANSI: Mr. Peyton. *What* Peyton?

PEYTON: Yes—that one.

JHANSI: And you ask me—standing for the things I do in this university—to sit down to dinner wih the president of the board of regents!

PEYTON: Mother'd asked him before I knew it.

JHANSI (*With scorn*): Your uncle!

PEYTON: He's not my uncle—he's mother's. And you see it's partly on account of grandmother just getting back from California. He's grandmother's brother-in-law, you know. I suppose she doesn't realize what it means to have to sit down to dinner with him—she's done it so much. And then mother thought it would be nice for you to meet him.

JHANSI: Nice!

PEYTON: He's pleasant at dinner.

JHANSI: Pleasant!

PEYTON: Mother's a little worried about my position in the university.

JHANSI: It would be wonderful for you to lose your position in the university.

PEYTON: Yes—wonderful.

JHANSI: And then you and I could walk forth free!

PEYTON: Free—but broke.

JHANSI: Peyton, you disappoint me. Just the fact that that man is coming to dinner changes you.

PEYTON: Oh, no. But you are fortunately situated, Jhansi having no people. It's easier to be free when there's nobody who minds.

JHANSI: I am going!

PEYTON: Oh come now, dearest, you can't go when you're expected for dinner. Nobody's that free.

JHANSI: Dinner! A dinner to celebrate our engagement! It's humiliating, Peyton. I should take you by the hand and you and I should walk together down the open road.

PEYTON: We will, Jhansi; we will—in time.

JHANSI: We should go now.

PEYTON: Think so? Mother's going to have turkey.

JHANSI: Better a dinner of berries and nuts—!

PEYTON: We'll have berries—cranberries, and nuts, too.

JHANSI: Where are my wraps?

PEYTON: (*Seizing her and kissing her*) Some day, serene and unhampered, we'll take to the open road—a road with berries and nuts.

(*Grandmother Peyton and Mrs. Root have appeared at door left.*)

MRS. ROOT: Mother, this is Peyton's friend, Miss Mason. One of our important students.

GRANDMOTHER (*In her brittle way*): Yes? I never was a very important student myself. I didn't like to study. Because my family were professors, I suppose.

MRS. ROOT: Peyton's grandmother is a descendant of Gustave Phelps—one of the famous teachers of pioneer days.

JHANSI (*Her head going up*): I am a descendant of people who never taught anybody anything!

PEYTON: Jhansi and I were just going to finish an article on Free Speech which must get to the Torch this evening.

GRANDMOTHER (*Moving toward easy chair near the fire*): Free Speech? How amusing.

PEYTON: You may be less amused some day, grandmother. (*Jhansi and Peyton go out left.*)

GRANDMOTHER: That may be a free speech. I wouldn't call it a pleasant one.

MRS. ROOT (*Sinking to the divan*): Oh, he was speaking of the open road again—berries and nuts—!

GRANDMOTHER (*Beginning to knit*): Berries and nuts? Well, it sounds quite innocuous to me. Some of our young people are less simple in their tastes.

MRS. ROOT (*In great distress*): Mother, how would you like to see your grandson become a gypsy?

GRANDMOTHER: Peyton a gypsy? You mean in a carnival?

MRS. ROOT: No, not in a carnival! In *life*.

GRANDMOTHER: But he isn't dark enough.

MRS. ROOT: And is *that* the only thing against it! I had thought you would be a help to me, mother.

GRANDMOTHER: Well, my dear Clara, I have no doubt I will be a help to you—in time. This idea of Peyton becoming a gypsy is too startling for me to be a help instantly. In the first place, could he be? You can't be anything you take it into your head to be—even if it is undesirable. And then, why should he be? Doesn't he still teach English right here in the university?

MRS. ROOT: I don't know how much longer he will teach it. He said the other day that American literature was a toddy with the *stick* left out. Saying that of the very thing he's paid to teach! It got in the papers and was denounced in an editorial on "Untrue Americans." Peyton—a descendant of John Peyton of Valley Forge! (*motions to the Revolutionary portrait*)—denounced in an article on Untrue Americans! And in one of those awful columns—those silly columns—they said maybe the stick hadn't been left out of his toddy. But it isn't that. Peyton doesn't drink—to speak of. (*A look to door left*) It's this girl. *She's* the stick. And I tell you people don't like it, mother. It's not what we pay our professors *for*. Peyton

used to be perfectly satisfied with civilization. But now he talks about society. Makes light remarks.

GRANDMOTHER: I should say that was going out of his way to be disagreeable. What business has a professor of English to say anything about society? It's not in his department.

MRS. ROOT: I told Peyton he should be more systematic.

GRANDMOTHER: How did this gypsy get here?

MRS. ROOT: She was brought up by a family named Mason. But it seems she was a gypsy child, who got lost or something, and those Masons took her in. I'm sure it was very good of them, and it's too bad they weren't able to make her more of a Christian. She is coming to have a following in the university! There are people who seem to think that because you're outside society you have some superior information about it.

GRANDMOTHER: Well, don't you think you're needlessly disturbed? In my day, a young man would be likely enough to fall in love with a good-looking gypsy, not very likely to marry her.

MRS. ROOT: Times have changed, mother. They marry them now. (*Both sigh*) Of course, it's very commendable of them.

GRANDMOTHER (*Grimly*): Oh, quite—commendable.

MRS. ROOT: I was brought up in university circles. I'm interested in *ideas*. But sometimes I think there are too *many* ideas.

GRANDMOTHER: An embarrassment of riches. So you have set out to civilize the young woman?

MRS. ROOT: I'd rather have her sit at my table than have my son leave some morning in a covered wagon!

GRANDMOTHER: I wonder how it is about gypsies. About the children. I wonder if it's as it is with the negroes.

MRS. ROOT: *Mother!*

GRANDMOTHER: It would be startling, wouldn't it?—if one of them should turn out to be a real gypsy and take to this open road.

MRS. ROOT (*Covering her face*): Oh!

GRANDMOTHER: Quite likely they'd do it by motor.

MRS. ROOT (*Rising*): Mother!—how can you say such

dreadful things—and just when I have this *trying* dinner. Oh, I wish Bessie would come! (*Goes to window*) She is a comfort to me.

GRANDMOTHER: Where is Bessie?

MRS. ROOT: She's away in the motor. (*Again covers face*) Bessie feels dreadfully about her brother. She is trying to do something. She said it would be a surprise—a happy surprise. (*Someone heard in the hall*) Perhaps this is Bessie—(*Enter Mr. Peyton*) Oh, it's Uncle George.

UNCLE GEORGE: Early I know. Came to have a little visit with Elizabeth. (*Goes to Grandmother and shakes hands*) How are you, young woman?

GRANDMOTHER: My nerves seem to be stronger than the nerves I see around me. And how are you, George?

UNCLE GEORGE: Oh, I'm *well*.

GRANDMOTHER: But—?

UNCLE GEORGE: Responsibilities.

GRANDMOTHER: The bank?

UNCLE GEORGE: I'd rather run ten banks than a tenth of a university. You can control money.

MRS. ROOT: I'm sorry, Uncle George, that Peyton should be adding to your worries.

UNCLE GEORGE: What's the matter with Peyton?

GRANDMOTHER: Wild oats.

UNCLE GEORGE: Well, I wish he'd sow them in less intellectual fields.

MRS. ROOT: I am prepared to speak freely with you, Uncle George. The matter with Peyton is this girl. Well, they're going to be married. Yes (*answering his gesture of protest*) and I think it's a good thing. She won't be in a position to say so much about freedom after she is married.

UNCLE GEORGE: But they say she's a gypsy.

MRS. ROOT: She won't be a gypsy after she's Peyton's wife. She'll be a married woman.

UNCLE GEORGE: Yes, but in the meantime we will have swallowed a gypsy.

GRANDMOTHER: And I was just wondering how it would be about the children.

MRS. ROOT: Mother, please don't be indelicate again. (*Pause*)

GRANDMOTHER: Well, if there's nothing else we may speak of, let's talk about free speech. They're writing a paper on it in there.

UNCLE GEORGE: I don't know what this university is coming to! An institution of learning! It isn't that I don't believe in free speech. Every true American believes in free speech, but— (*Slight Pause*)

GRANDMOTHER (*With Emphasis*): Certainly.

UNCLE GEORGE: Ask them to come out here with their paper on free speech. I'll be glad to give them the benefit of my experience.

MRS. ROOT: Yes it will be delightful to all be together. (*Exit door left*)

GRANDMOTHER: This girl doesn't look to me like one who is thirsting for the benefit of another person's experience.

UNCLE GEORGE: She's a bad influence. She's leading our young people to criticise the society their fathers have builded up.

GRANDMOTHER: There's a great deal of ingratitude in the world. (*Enter Mrs. Root followed by Peyton and Jhansi*)

MRS. ROOT: I told Uncle George you were eager to bring him and Jhansi together. Jhansi, this is Mr. Peyton, who looks after the affairs of the university for you students. Of course you've heard about Miss Mason, Uncle George, one of our—cleverest students.

UNCLE GEORGE: Yes, we were speaking of Miss Mason's cleverness just the other day—in board meeting.

JHANSI: And just the other day—at the student assembly—we were speaking of how you look after the affairs of the university for us.

GRANDMOTHER: I hope you both spoke affectionately.

UNCLE GEORGE: Well, Peyton, very busy I take it. You're adding to your duties, aren't you?

PEYTON: Not that I know of.

UNCLE GEORGE: Your grandmother said something about a high falutin paper on free speech.

PEYTON: I suppose that's an inherited tendency. You know one of my ancestors signed a paper on free speech. It had a highfalutin name: "The Declaration of Independence"!

MRS. ROOT: I wish Bessie would come!

UNCLE GEORGE: Do you think much about your ancestors, Peyton?

PEYTON: Not a great deal.

UNCLE GEORGE: Peyton has some rather interesting ancestors, Miss Mason. There's Captain John Peyton. That's his picture. He helped win one of the battles which made this country possible—the country in which you are living. And a descendant of John Peyton—Richard Peyton (*indicates other picture*)—gave the money which founded this university—the university in which you are now acquiring your education.

JHANSI (*Lightly*): Perhaps it would be quite as well if this university—and this country—never had existed.

MRS. ROOT: I don't see why Bessie *doesn't* come!

JHANSI: Of course I look at it as an outsider. I am not a part of your society.

UNCLE GEORGE: Peyton is.

MRS. ROOT: There's Bessie! (*Bessie rushes in*)

BESSIE: Grandmother! (*Swiftly kisses her*) How wonderful to have you with us again! Dear Uncle George!

UNCLE GEORGE: Glad you got here, Bessie. Your mother has been looking for you.

BESSIE (*With a look around*): Isn't it beautiful to all be together? A real family party! And now—we have a moment or two before dinner, mother?

MRS. ROOT: The man who brought the turkey in from the country had a runaway, so it was a little late in arriving.

BESSIE: How fortunate! Oh, it does seem that all things work together for the best. Mother, I have had a completely successful day!

GRANDMOTHER: Where've you been, Bessie?

BESSIE: I've been fifty miles to the north—in Baxter County. Does that mean anything to you, Jhansi?

JHANSI: Nothing whatever.

BESSIE (*Still breathlessly*): Dear uncle, I hope, you will understand what I am about to do. It might seem unrestrained—not in the best of taste, but it's just because you stand for so much in Peyton's life that I want you to hear our good news as soon as we hear it ourselves. You knew that these two child-

ren were in love and going to be married. (*A bow from Uncle George*) You know—Jhansi, dear, I may speak very freely, may I not?

JHANSI: I believe in free speech.

BESSIE: Yes—how dear of you. Jhansi has endured in proud silence a great grief. And now, dear child, because of the touching dignity with which you have stood outside and alone, it is a moment of special joyfulness to me when I can say—Welcome Within!

PEYTON: What are you talking about, Bessie?

BESSIE: You must not stand outside society! You belong *within* the gates. You are one of us!

JHANSI: I'm *not*.

BESSIE: Dear child you are as respectable as we are.

JHANSI (*Rising*): I am *not*.

BESSIE: Of course, you can't grasp it in an instant. But I have looked it all up, dear. I have the proofs.

PEYTON: Well it wasn't your affair, Bessie.

BESSIE: I made it my affair because I love my brother. Jhansi dear, (*as one who tells tremendous good news*) your father was Henry Harrison, a milkman in the town of Sunny Center—an honorable and respected man. Your parents were married in the Baptist Church!

JHANSI: I deny it! I deny this charge!

BESSIE (*Stepping to the rear door*): Dear Senator and Mrs. Byrd, will you come now?

(*Enter State Senator Byrd and Mrs. State Senator Byrd, Mrs. Byrd carrying a large book*)

BESSIE: Jhansi dear, you are about to enter upon the happiest moment of your life, for State Senator Byrd, one of our law-making body, is a cousin of your dear dead mother.

SENATOR BYRD: Aggie's little girl! (*Approaches Jhansi with outstretched hands. She stands like a rock*)

BESSIE: And here, Jhansi, is your cousin Mrs. Byrd, who has come all this way to assure you you have a family.

MRS. BYRD: Indeed you have! There's Ella Andrews, one of our teachers—a lovely girl. She's your first cousin. We are second cousins. You may have some little family pride in knowing that I was last spring elected President of the Federated Clubs of Baxter County. Just last week I entertained the

officers of all the clubs at our home—our new home, erected last year after your cousin Ephraim completed his first term in the upper house of the State Legislature. Your cousin Ephraim has been re-elected. He is on the Ways and Means Committee.

UNCLE GEORGE (*Approaching Senator Byrd*): I have heard of Senator Ephraim Byrd of the Ways and Means Committee. That was good work you fellows— (*They talk aside*)

MRS. ROOT: And to think, Jhansi, that your cousin Mrs. Byrd is a prominent clubwoman!

GRANDMOTHER (*After a look at Jhansi*): Her cup runneth over.

MRS. ROOT: Isn't Bessie wonderful, mother? How did you find it all out, Bessie?

BESSIE: From clue to clue I worked my way to Sunny Center. I would say to myself—Do this for Peyton; do this for Jhansi. And so, I heard of an old minister who had been there for years and years. I went to him and—he had married Jhansi's father and mother! Dearest child, your mother taught in his Sunday-School!

SENATOR BYRD: Oh, yes, Aggie loved the Baptist Sunday-School!

JHANSI: It's very strange that my mother—I am referring to Mrs. Mason—never told me of this!

BESSIE: But she never told you you were a gypsy, either, did she? No; she just wanted you to think you were their own child. And then I suppose you heard some foolish tale at school.

MRS. BYRD: You see Jhansi's mother and father—her real ones—died of typhoid fever before she was two years old. They got it from the cows. Well, the Harrisons were friends of the Mason's—they all worked together in the church—and so they took Jhansi, and soon after that they moved away and we lost track of them. You know what a busy world it is—particularly for people who have duties in their community.

JHANSI: I haven't accepted this story! You can't prove it! (*Mrs. Byrd impressively hands her husband the book*)

SENATOR BYRD: "Iowa descendants of New England families."

MRS. ROOT: Oh, yes; that is *one* of the books in which our family is written up! (*To Peyton*) My dearest boy, from my heart I congratulate you!

SENATOR BYRD: Pages fifty-seven to sixty-one—inclusive, are devoted, Jhansi, to our family.

MRS. BYRD: My own family appears on page 113.

(*Senator Byrd holds the book out to Jhansi, who once more stands like a rock. Uncle George steps forward*)

UNCLE GEORGE: Oh, you are a descendant of Peter Byrd.

SENATOR BYRD: One of those dare-devils whose leg was shot under him at Bull Run.

BESSIE: You heard that, Jhansi?

MRS. ROOT: A descendant of Peter Byrd!—whose leg was shot *under* him—

JHANSI: So *this* is what I was brought here for, is it? To have my character torn down—to ruin my reputation and threaten my integrity by seeking to muzzle me with a leg at Bull Run and set me down in the Baptist Sunday-School in a milk-wagon! I see the purpose of it all. I understand the hostile motive behind all this—but I tell you it's a *lie*. Something here—(*Hand on heart*)—tells me I am not respectable!

UNCLE GEORGE: Reaction.

JHANSI: I am Jhansi—Jhansi—a child of the gypsies! I am a wanderer! I am an outlaw!

MRS. BYRD: Yes, you are Jhansi. And did you ever stop to think how you came by that outlandish name?

JHANSI: It has always assured me of my birthright.

MRS. BYRD: Well, you'd better look in your geography. You were named after a town in India where your mother's missionary circle was helping to support a missionary.

SENATOR BYRD: Aggie was crazy about the missionaries.

JHANSI (*Falling back, breaking*): Peyton, I release you from our engagement.

PEYTON: No. N--o; don't do that. (*Stoutly*) I love you for yourself alone—in spite of anything that may be true. But I must say Bessie—!

JHANSI (*Beginning to sob*): I can't bear it. I can't bear it! And to think that *Peyton's* mother was an illegitimate child.

MRS. ROOT (*Dazed*): What's that?

GRANDMOTHER (*Rising*): Yes; what *is* that?

MRS. ROOT: Am I to understand—?

GRANDMOTHER: Am I to be told—at my age—that I gave birth to an illegitimate child? This is a surprise to me—and not a pleasant one!

PEYTON (*To Jhansi*): It would have been better not to have mentioned that.

UNCLE GEORGE: This *is* reaction. I think perhaps we need a physician.

JHANSI: I don't need a physician. Peyton certainly told me that his mother was an illegitimate child. Of course, Peyton, if you were just *boasting* about your family—say so.

UNCLE GEORGE: What have you to say, Peyton?

GRANDMOTHER: Before he says anything, Bessie, you bring me that portfolio from the lower right-hand corner of my desk. Key in the upper left hand pigeon hole.

MRS. ROOT: Peyton!

PEYTON: Why I didn't mean any harm, mother. I certainly didn't mean anything against you, or grandmother. Quite the contrary. I was just anxious that Jhansi should have a little respect for our family. It didn't seem to have a leg to stand on.

JHANSI: So you made it up—out of whole cloth?

PEYTON: No, not out of whole cloth.

GRANDMOTHER: Out of what cloth, then? Kindly tell me, out of what cloth?

MRS. ROOT: Peyton is not himself.

PEYTON: Well, it just came into my head that it was possible. You see, grandmother, your having moved—I do wish you could see that I meant nothing against your character. Absolutely the contrary. But your having *moved*—

GRANDMOTHER: My having moved where?

PEYTON: Your having moved from New York State to Ohio at just that time—

GRANDMOTHER: I always did like to travel. Is that anything against a person's character?

PEYTON: I was claiming that you *had* character.

GRANDMOTHER: I'll stick to my own, thank you. I've had it quite a while and am used to it. But I'd like to know right now what there is so immoral in moving from one state to another—even if you are going to have a baby?

JHANSI (*Raising her head*): There is nothing immoral in anything.

GRANDMOTHER: Fiddlesticks. (*Bessie returns with portfolio*) You found it, Bessie? The key? Here, Peyton; come here. (*Opens portfolio, takes out a rolled paper*) Happily preserved for this defense of my character in my old age, is my wedding certificate.

MRS. BYRD: This is painful. (*She turns and looks at a print on the rear wall; motions Senator Byrd to join her*)

GRANDMOTHER: I want you to look at the date—right there beside that pink cupid—cherub, perhaps it is—anyway, read aloud the figures which you see.

PEYTON (*Sullenly*): 1869.

GRANDMOTHER: And here, in this other document, very fortunately at hand to meet the attacks of my only grandson upon my integrity, what do you read there?

PEYTON: Clara—aged six weeks.

GRANDMOTHER: And the date?

(*Mrs. Root, Bessie, Uncle George, all listen a little anxiously.*)

PEYTON: December, 1871. (*A sigh of relief*)

GRANDMOTHER: I trust now, Peyton, you will admit that a woman may move from one state to another without being dissolute. (*At this word Mrs. Root is unable to bear more and hides her face in her handkerchief*)

UNCLE GEORGE (*As one saving the situation*): Genealogy is interesting. One is democratic, of course, but when there is behind one what there is behind us, Senator, it enhances one's powers—responsibility—obligation. (*He has taken up the book and been running through the pages*) Descendants of John Peyton. Here, Peyton, are some things about your ancestors. Read them. Perhaps then instead of tearing down you will have an impulse to build up. I commend this book to you young people for study. It will do you no harm to think a little of those worthy men from whom you come. (*Marks place with a card*)

JHANSI (*Springing up*): I shall waste no time thinking of the worthy men from whom I come! If I am related to a law-maker—I owe it to my soul to become a law-breaker!

MRS. ROOT: You see, Bessie, what you have done.

JHANSI: When I thought there was in me no taint of civilization, I could put up with your silly conventions, but if in a

material sense I am part of your society, then I have a spiritual obligation to fulfil in leaving it! Peyton, respectability threatens to wall us in and stifle us. Are you ready to walk from this house with me tonight, entering upon a free union that says that—(*snaps her fingers*) for law?

PEYTON: Why—certainly.

MRS. BYRD: *Well*, if it comes to a matter of not caring to claim relationship, *we* certainly hesitated some time. Those Harrisons were not all they should be.

JHANSI (*A note of hope in her voice*): No?

MRS. BYRD: I said to Senator Byrd, now that the girl is marrying into one of the best families in the state—not that that influenced us especially, but I said, if she is trying to make something of herself, we must stand by her, and we will mention only pleasant things. We will not allude to what her grandfather did!

JHANSI: What did he do?

SENATOR BYRD: He burned down his neighbor's house because that neighbor chased home his pigs.

JHANSI: *Really?* Yes!—my grandfather would do that!

PEYTON: Were any of the family found in the charred remains?

SENATOR BYRD: The family, I believe, escaped.

MRS. BYRD: But no thanks to old man Harrison.

JHANSI: No!—I'm sure grandfather *meant* them to burn. (*Seizing book*) I wonder if grandfather's protest is recorded in this book!

MRS. BYRD: That book does not emphasize unfortunate occurrences.

MRS. ROOT: And how right it is! One should think only of the *good* in human nature.

PEYTON (*Looking with Jhansi*): What is this fine print at the bottom of the page?

MRS. BYRD (*Hastily*): That is not important.

SENATOR BYRD: It is in fine print because it is not important.

PEYTON: One of the descendants of Peter Byrd. (*To Jhansi*) The leg at Bull Run, you know. He—

MRS. ROOT: Peyton, remember that you are in your own house.

PEYTON: "Unfaithful to the high office of treasurer of the Baxter County Cemetery Association."

JHANSI (*Gasping, then beaming*): Why—why!—a grave robber! Was he a *near* relative?

MRS. BYRD: I must say, Miss Root, that we did not come here to have our family inquired into as far back as ancient history!

MRS. ROOT: No, Mrs. Byrd, I quite agree with you that it is not necessary to go too far back in any family.

GRANDMOTHER: Neither necessary nor desirable.

BESSIE: Those early days must have been very trying.

PEYTON: Jhansi! The fine print of your family is *thrilling*. Here is a man—

MRS. ROOT: Peyton, stop reading from that tiresome and obsolete book. It is not hospitable.

MRS. BYRD: Turn to your own family history and read a little fine print in it! (*The other members of the Peyton-Root family give each other startled, nervous glances*)

PEYTON: Why what a lovely idea. Uncle has marked it for us. (*After looking*) Fine print in our family?

MRS. BYRD (*Grimly*): It's there.

BESSIE: Genealogy is so confusing. I never could understand it.

MRS. ROOT: And I don't see why one should *try* to understand it. Live well in the present—that is sufficient.

GRANDMOTHER: It looks to me as if that book was not thoughtfully edited. I'm surprised it has sold.

PEYTON (*Snatching book from Jhansi*): Jhansi! don't want to boast! I hope I shall not become a snob. You too have a family—and they had their impulsive moments—but what was the most *largely* low-down thing a man of early days could do? (*Right of stage Peytons and Roots draw together anxiously; left, the Byrds wait complacently*) As uncle has pointed out, Jhansi, I am a descendant of Captain John Peyton. But when you have a remote ancestor, you also have his less remote descendants—a fact sometimes overlooked. Well, Stuart Peyton—

BESSIE: Mother, I wonder if the turkey isn't ready now?

MRS. ROOT: It's time for it to be ready. (*Exit*)

PEYTON: Stuart Peyton—"convicted of selling whiskey and firearms to the Indians." (*Assumes an overbearing attitude*)

MRS. BYRD: I guess the early days were trying, in more than one family.

PEYTON (*Peering into the book*): And what is this? What is *this*? Stuart Peyton was the father of *Richard Peyton*—

JHANSI: Who founded this university!

PEYTON (*In the voice of Uncle George*): The university in which you are now acquiring your education.

MRS. BYRD: Oh I have no doubt that inducing the Indians to massacre the whites was *profitable*.

PEYTON: A good sound basis for the family fortune.

UNCLE GEORGE: Young man, you go too far!

PEYTON (*Holding book out to Uncle George*): In thinking of these worthy men from whom I come? (*Turns to wall on which hang portraits of John and Richard Peyton*) We don't seem to have Stuart's picture. Jhansi, I don't know that we need to leave society. There seems little—crevices in these walls of respectability.

JHANSI: And whenever we feel a bit stifled we can always find air through our family trees!

MRS. BYRD: I think, Senator, that we will not remain longer.

(*Enter Mrs. Root.*)

MRS. ROOT: Mary was just coming. Now we'll have dinner!

BESSIE: Yes, a little family party to celebrate the happy—

PEYTON (*Again bent over his family history*): Grandmother! Here's something about your ancestor, Gustave Phelps.

GRANDMOTHER (*Rising. With weight*): Peyton—close that book.

CURTAIN

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